

2005 South Carolina Family Friendly Workplace Awards



Category I (3-49 employees)

Winner: Star Music Company
Columbia – 16 employees
Retail store

Star Music Company truly is a “family business.” Family-owned and operated, children can often be seen in the store doing homework, or playing while Mom works. In addition, Star Music:

- Pays 100% health insurance for employees and family
- Supports parent involvement in education and promotes volunteerism
- Allows flexible scheduling; provides paid leave for family reasons
- Offers employee purchase plan to buy musical instruments at cost
- Provides payday advances, loans, and Christmas bonuses

Because of their family friendly environment, Star Music has reaped the benefits of high employee morale and a turnover rate much lower than the industry average.

“Responsibilities to family are 24 hours a day and sometimes need to take priority even during work hours.” (Quote from award application)

Category II (50-249 employees)

Winner: St. Jude Medical, Cardiac Rhythm Management Division
Pickens – 246 employees
Manufacturer of medical equipment

St. Jude Medical, CRMD, was an honorable mention in this category in 2003 and 2004. They promote a culture of caring through:

- Adoption assistance
- Two paid hours per month for volunteering in local schools
- Tuition reimbursement for continuing education
- Flextime: six hours per month paid to attend to family and personal business
- Giveaways and bonuses designed to keep employee morale high in spite of overtime to meet production demands, and managers serving employees lunch to say thanks

St. Jude Medical, CRMD, has seen a low turnover rate because of its commitment to a family friendly workplace and is meeting production goals that are at an all-time high.

“It is clear that St. Jude Medical is committed to its employees’ and their families’ well-being as well as the community in which they live.” (Quote from award application)

Honorable Mention: ZF Lemforder Corporation, Systems Division
Duncan – 220 employees
Assembly of automotive components

This Upstate automotive parts manufacturer is committed to taking care of their employees on the job and off. Facing possibly lengthy layoffs due to a 4-6 week shutdown at a major customer, ZF Lemforder Corp. created the “Lifestyle Maintenance Club,” which helps employees in the period before they become eligible for unemployment benefits. It is a payroll deduction savings plan with a matching employer contribution—for every \$500 employee saves, ZF Lemforder adds \$75. The majority of personnel are saving at the maximum return level. In addition:

- Employee satisfaction is measured through focus groups, surveys, and participation in company sponsored programs
- An opt-out credit is offered to employees who decline health insurance coverage
- Company pays up to \$200 per year fitness reimbursement

Because of these things and more, ZF Lemforder Corporation, Systems Division has low turnover, and its production and customer ratings continue to increase.

“Built on a solid platform of company support and appreciation of our employees, ZF Lemforder – Systems in Duncan, SC is a great place to work!” (Quote from award application)

Category III (250-999 employees)

Winner: First Financial Holdings, Inc.
Headquartered in Charleston – 861 employees
Financial services institution

This Lowcountry financial services institution, soon to celebrate its 71st year, credits a large part of its longevity and success to a commitment to its employees, both full and part time. This commitment is shown through annual retention bonuses for part-time employees, which have helped reduce turnover of this segment of their workforce by 24%. The company also utilizes the strength of its retirees. Rather than look outside the company when temporary help is needed, retirees are asked to serve as the company’s temporary pool of employees. Over 90% of retirees participate in this program, which allows them to stay connected to their former workplace and gives the company the benefit of their knowledge and experience. In addition, First Financial Holdings, Inc.:

- Works with Trident United Way to provide child care resource and referral for employees
- Offers “Share the Care” elder care program for employees and their parents through a partnership with Care for Life, a geriatric care management agency
- Gives four hours vacation time given to employees who donate blood (up to 8 hours per year); vacation time is also provided as an incentive to complete in-house training
- Sponsors “Your Wellness Connection” – links to health and wellness information and services through company in-house computer network
- Allows employees to earn money for time spent exercising that they can use in purchasing benefits from cafeteria plan

“...the company (First Financial Holdings, Inc.) earned its reputation as the employer of choice because of creating its long-term commitment and investment in creating a working environment that focused on families, values, and ethics as its corporate culture.” (Quote from award application)

Category IV (1,000 employees and up)

Winner: Schneider Electric – Square D Company
Columbia, Seneca, and Greenville – 1139 employees in South Carolina
Electrical manufacturing

Schneider Electric – Square D Company believes that one of the most important things a company can do to be family friendly is to compensate its employees enough to ensure a good quality of life for their families. Affordable options for health care are among the many benefits this company provides, including:

- 50% match for health care flexible spending account
- On-site wellness center
- Alternative work arrangements to meet personal needs
- Military leave and pay—company pays difference between regular pay and military pay
- Paid membership in technical societies
- Employee personal computer purchase plan
- Helping Hands Committee—employees helping employees during times of need
- Scholarships for employee children
- Matching gift program for employees' charitable donations

Because Schneider Electric – Square D Company is such a great place to work, its turnover rate in 2004 was only 2%.

“We offer competitive wages, a clean and comfortable work environment, opportunities for employees to serve the community and opportunities for employees to enhance their skills.” (Quote from award application)

Honorable Mention: Carolina First Bank
Headquartered in Greenville, 1127 employees in SC
Financial services institution

Carolina First Bank, a winner in this category in 2002 and honorable mention in 2004, has shown that while it is tempting to cut benefits in an effort to lower costs, companies can be successful by focusing on growth and providing extensive employee and family oriented benefits and policies. Company earnings per share have risen steadily since implementing family friendly practices, including:

- A company match of up to \$2600 per year for child care expenses
- A company subsidy for adult/elder care
- Military leave – company pays difference between regular pay and military pay

“As a South Carolina-based company we are committed to providing excellent benefits and employment opportunities to the people of South Carolina.” (Quote from award application)

Category V (government)

Winner: City of Greenville
854 employees
Municipal government

The City of Greenville knew that if it wanted to make its community a great place to live and work, it needed to invest in the city's youngest citizens. With City Council and select employees, the City of Greenville developed an Early Childhood Strategic Plan, with the vision "All children in the City of Greenville will enter school healthy and ready to succeed, and families will have the support and resources they need to promote positive early childhood development and balance the demands of work and family." One of the goals of the strategic plan is to: "Increase number of employees in Greenville whose employers offer family friendly policies and practices." The City leads the charge by setting the example. Some of their practices include:

- Maintaining a full-time occupational health nurse and medical assistant on staff
- Health initiatives – "Greater Greenville Shrinkdown" and "Greenville Walks"
- Support for new parents: provides all expectant mothers with parenting guidebook called "Understanding Children" and other materials from United Way's Success By 6 initiative. Also added a lactation room based on requests from Work-Life Balance and Employee Wellness survey

"The City of Greenville... has made a long-term commitment that begins at home, within its own workforce, but reaches out to impact the whole community at large." (Quote from award application)

Category VI (non-profit)

Winner: Palmetto Health
Headquartered in Columbia -- 8900 employees
Health care

Palmetto Health, one of the state's largest employers, with locations across the state, values the physical, spiritual and emotional health of its employees. Palmetto Health's employee assistance program, E-Care, utilizes the strength of the pastoral care department to help employees face and overcome challenges in work and in life. This unique model has been exceptionally popular with employees and is highly utilized. Pastoral care staff are also integrated into the daily workings of many departments. In addition, Palmetto Health:

- Offers a variety of flexible schedules, including weekend only
- Has an on-site child care center
- Provides tuition assistance for continuing education
- Sponsors Kid's Kamp, a summer day camp for employee's children ages 4-6
- Encourages employee's children to consider a career in health care through a job shadowing program and scholarships for those pursuing a career in medicine

"Simply put, despite our size and complexity, we truly care about the people who work here and make us successful. We inculcate a spirit of compassion, concern, and support to our employees and extend that to their families." (Quote from award application)